

MARCH 25, 2015 COMMISSION MEETING

RIVERVIEWS, ARTSPACE

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

COMMISSIONERS Present: Charles Ellis, Sharron Kitchen Miller, Shelley Kruger Weisberg, John Rainero, Jay Dick, Wanda Judd, Robert Behr, Lorita Copland Daniels, Jo Hodgins, Faye Bailey, Grace Han Wolf, Ron Fabin, Dorothy Blackwell

STAFF Present: Margaret Vanderhye, Mackenzie Byrne, Cathy Welborn, Casey Polczynski

Chairman Charles Ellis called the meeting to order at 9:30 am following a breakfast reception with the Lynchburg Economic Development Commission and a tour of the Academy of Fine Arts. Executive Director Margaret Vanderhye introduced guest Petrina Jones, the new executive director of Virginians for the Arts.

Mary Ann Racine, Executive Director of Riverviews Artspace, welcomed the Commission members and gave a brief history and background on the meeting space and art center.

The December 2014 meeting Minutes were approved unanimously upon a motion made by Faye Bailey and seconded by Bob Behr.

Margaret Vanderhye presented the updated FY15 budget with cuts and proposed FY16 budget. Ms. Vanderhye stated that the second round payments would be approximately 10%. Vanderhye reviewed the 5% budget cut made by the Governor in August and the saving strategies adopted by the Commission at the October 1, 2014 meeting including the cancellation of the 2015 ArtWorks conference, the elimination of Technical Assistance grants, waitlist funds, and the use of unused Local Government Challenge grant funds to offset the \$195,373 cut. For FY16, the cut will be close to \$274,000 or 7%. With the exception of the Local Government Challenge Grants which will not be affected, the other grant categories will have proportionally reduced funding. The draft budget includes a proposal to restore the Artist Fellowships and to preserve the Special Recognition Award, each at a slightly reduced level of funding.

Chairman Ellis shared that a one-day ArtWorks conference will be reinstated. Executive Director Vanderhye explained that the cost would be supplemented by private funds that the staff was seeking to help offset the Conference costs. Ms. Vanderhye will be working with Virginians for the Arts for Advocacy Day. Jay Dick suggested that the VCA and VFTA issue a joint press release about the conference. Hilton Garden Inn will offer a reduced rate for overnight guests and speakers. The conference registration fees will increase slightly to address the budget issues as well. The planning is for 300 attendees and top level speakers for workshops and breakout sessions with the number depending on budget considerations. Sharron Kitchen Miller asked for time built into the day for

networking opportunities. Jay Dick encouraged the staff to get an announcement out by early fall at the latest as people are already planning their year's activities and budgets.

Ms. Vanderhye announced that the budget proposal includes a revised Technical Assistance Grant procedure for FY16: the grant application process will open in May for a month and applications for up to \$1000 each will be judged in on merit. Money will be awarded to additional grantees as unused or returned grant funds become available.

Jay Dick questioned the Mid Atlantic dues and asked what our return on investment was from the annual payment. Ms. Vanderhye responded that it was conservatively three to one and usually higher. Proposed funding levels for Tourism Grants will remain steady as reflected in the revised FY15 budget numbers. Jo Hodgkin asked if we get in-kind funding assistance for the Poetry Out Loud venues. Arts In Education Coordinator Casey Polczynski explained that we provide a small stipend for the venues with a contract laying out the expectations we have of the hosting organization. Jo Hodgkin asked if the Commission might also look at sponsorships for this program to offset set costs. Casey Polczynski said that public television station WCVE helped the Commission by donating time and funds for the documentary film about our Poetry Out Loud program. Costs for the previous POL budgets were around \$27,500.

Deputy Director Mackenzie Byrne reviewed the reimbursement guidelines for the Commissioners.

Casey Polczynski gave an update on Poetry Out Loud. Ms. Polczynski thanked Commissioners who attended the regional championships. The partnership with WCVE has been very positive. Sharron Kitchen Miller described the central regionals and the state championships and described the overall excellence of the program. Ms. Kitchen Miller noted that Secretary of Education Anne Holton presented the awards to the winners and had made herself available for a personal interview with WCVE for the documentary. Vice Chairman Miller also stated the sponsors were extremely pleased with the program and called the effort a great collaboration and great source of pride for VCA. Shelley Kruger Weisberg spoke about the potential the program presents for nurturing critical thinking, creative expression and public speaking skills. Lorita Copeland Daniels praised the format which consisted of introductions, insights into the students and audience interaction. The PBS documentary will be 90 minutes and will be broadcast on local affiliates throughout the state. WCVE will put together a 30 minute promotional video with highlights of POL for VCA to use. Jo Hodgkin said the audience was reminded that poetry is an important and valid art form. Vice Chair Kitchen Miller noted that the special performance at the state finals by the group Teens with a Purpose was amazing.

Program Coordinator Cathy Welborn gave an update on the January panel workshops, the grants received by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline and the upcoming review sessions. Charles Ellis reminded the commissioners that they must be silent observers during the panel reviews but encouraged them to take thorough notes for the June Commission meeting so they could share their observations with fellow Commissioners.

Committee reports

Policy Committee Meeting: Jo Hodgins Chair gave an overview of Committee Work Plan, Bylaws and Policy Manuals, grant guidelines and procedures. She reported on suggested revisions and next steps as well as the feedback the committee would be seeking from the Commission at each of the next three full Commission meetings. The committee plans to meet over the summer to have the Policy Manual, By-Laws and Guidelines revised and presented for a vote in concept at the fall meeting so a final vote can be taken in December.

Wanda Judd gave an overview of the Education Committee: Ms. Judd shared the committee would be reviewing the guidelines for Arts In Education grants. Judd noted that the artist roster has not been updated since 2010. Arts In Education Coordinator Casey Polczynski will put together a survey for the current list of artists and offer some proposals for next steps to expand the roster. The committee will review and decide whether to revise the roster guidelines. The Committee may conduct regional roundtables for AIE and / or establish an advisory panel of statewide partners. Other agenda items that the committee may consider include a creative aging program, internships with teens, art classes specifically for veterans, and professional workshops for teaching artists. The use of online resources and methods may also be explored.

Chairman Ellis announced the membership and tasks for the Nominating and the Special Constituencies Committees.

Special Constituencies Committee: Lorita Daniels, [Dorothy Blackwell](#), Bob Behr and Faye Bailey were appointed to work on issues relating but not limited to the topics of veterans, aging, and accessibility.

Nominating Committee: Ron Fabin, Grace Han Wolf and Faye Bailey were appointed to recommend the slate for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary of the Commission for FY16. The committee will submit their report to the Chair by mid-May and elections will be held at the June Commission meeting. The new officers will begin serving their terms in July and will preside at the fall 2016 Commission meeting.

Under old and new business, Chairman Ellis drew the commissioners' attention to the letter from Virginia Opera outlining the recent changes they had made to their management and budget. John Rainero inquired about whether the Commission has access to economic impact studies on the arts in Virginia. Jay Dick responded by mentioning the resources that Americans for the Arts can provide on a state by state basis. Jay Dick also made a request for the Commission to consider NASAA and AFTA calendars in the future when setting the dates for full meetings of the Commission.

Director Vanderhye noted that commissioners Ron Fabin, Dorothy Blackwell and Wanda Judd will have their own artwork displayed at the Executive Mansion on April 22<sup>nd</sup> during Virginia Garden Week. Two performers from the American Youth Harp Ensemble, a VCA grant recipient, will also be featured. Vanderhye also shared the Virginia Capital Connection Quarterly Winter Magazine contained an article *Mobilizing our Community: The Arts Education Balance* by Casey Polczynski. The piece increases awareness of the value of the arts to increase not only skills related to a specific art form but also to facilitate social and intellectual development. VCA was noted for providing grant funding for Pre K-12 artist residencies for innovative programming cited in article.

Following lunch at the ArtSpace Gallery, Rita McClenny, Director of the VA Tourism Corporation presented a video and discussed the various ways the Commission could partner with VA Tourism Corporation to promote the arts and cultural tourism.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm.